

The Builder.

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THE antiquities of the City of London are so little known to many of its inhabitants, notwithstanding numerous published accounts of them, that we think it cannot be otherwise than useful and entertaining to follow the "British Archaeological Association" in their examination of them, which they have wisely begun. Notwithstanding bad weather, they mustered strongly on the 14th, in *Barber Surgeons' Hall*, Monkwell-street, and found all the archives and curious plate of the company spread out for their examination. Many of our readers have noticed the curiously carved 17th century doorway, guarded by a projecting hood, belonging to the Hall. To remind them of it we re-insert a sketch given in one of our early volumes, where, too, there is some account of the building, and its contents.* The very names of half the streets in the city are full of information, but we are all in too much hurry to remember it. They are repeated by rote and lose their significance. Dwell for an instant, for example, on the name of the street we are in, Monkwell-street,—*monk's well*,—and it will be found to lead us to an Abbot's house, and a hermitage, the crypt of which remains and was visited on this occasion, as we shall presently have to tell;—and a very curious crypt it is. Amongst the plate on the table was the silver gilt cup and cover, with bells, presented to the company by King Henry VIII.; and we remembered what Pepys had written, 1622-3:—"To Chyrurgeons' Hall, where we had a fine dinner and good learned company, many doctors of physike, and we used with extraordinary great respect. Among other observables, we drank the King's health out of a gilt cup given by King Henry VIII. to this company, with bells hanging at it, which every man is to ring by shaking after he hath drank up the whole cup." The company sold this cup with other plate in the 17th century to build their hall, but, as Mr. Pettigrew pointed out in a paper read by him to the meeting in the court-room, it was purchased by Edward Aris (master of the company in 1651), whose portrait is in the court-room, and presented by him again to the company. They have also a handsome cup with pendant acorns, presented by Charles II.; and four ancient crowns, worn by the master and wardens on their installation. The latter, as we understand, were recovered from cobwebs and obscurity about thirty years ago, when Mr. Anthony Lyon was master.

The paper to which we have alluded was a history of the Barber-Surgeons' Company, preceded by an inquiry into the history of "Barbery and Surgery" from the earliest times. It was an exceedingly appropriate and interesting disquisition, and will doubtless be printed in full. We shall avail ourselves of it chiefly for some information respecting

the building and pictures, but will first make two or three notes on the subject of which is more particularly treated. The conjunction of two such opposite functions as shaving and surgery may appear to us in the present day as a remarkable incongruity, but recourse to the records of former times enables us to perceive the reasons which led to the union, especially when we remember that the operations of both are manual. In the twelfth century the ignorance and cupidity of the monks, who chiefly practised medicine, caused the Lateran Council to forbid their attendance at the bedside of the sick other than as ministers of religion, and in 1139 to prohibit the regular clergy in like manner; the result of which canon was to throw the composition of medicines and the performance of surgical operations into the hands of the servants of the priests or others.

Charlemagne established many schools in various places where medicine was taught, and amongst the rules at that time laid down was this, that the physician could not claim his fee *when the patient died*. The first surgeon regularly appointed to attend an English monarch, so far as the reader could ascertain, was Richard de Wy, in 1360. For a long time there was a great scarcity of properly taught surgeons; but many, still acting as surgeons and barbers, came over from France, and, in 1461-2, Edward IV. granted a patent of incorporation to the company of which we have been speaking. At this time men allowed their beards to grow, and shaving was an operation of rare performance unless for surgical purposes, and there is reason to believe the surgeons of this period practised as barbers. In the 32nd of Henry VIII. an act was passed to incorporate the barbers and surgeons into one body; and they were not separated till the 18th of George II. (1745). Guy's Hospital, due to the beneficence of a bookseller of that name, was established in 1721, St. George's in 1734, the London in 1740, and the Middlesex in 1745. We must not, however, longer follow this part of the subject. The original theatre at Barber-Surgeons' Hall, which escaped the fire of London, was built by Inigo Jones, and is called by Walpole one of the best of his works. It is described by Hutton, in his "New View of London," as of "an elliptical form and commodiously fitted up with four degrees of seats of cedar wood, and adorned with the figures of the seven liberal sciences and the twelve signs of the zodiac; also containing the skeleton of an ostrich put up by Dr. Hobbes, 1692, with a bust of King Charles I." and other matters. "The theatre was finished with an elliptical cupola, and in the reign of George I. the hall and theatre were repaired and beautified under the direction and at the expense of Lord Burlington, in compliment to the architect." It was pulled down about the year 1782, the materials sold, and three houses erected on its site. It is remarkable that there exists no engraving of it; but Mr. Peter Cunningham acquaints us that "the design of the Chirurgeons' Theatre," an oval, dated 1636, is preserved in the portfolio of Jones's drawings at Worcester College, Oxford.†

The minute of the Court ordering the erection of the theatre is dated Feb. 11, 1635, and provides that it shall be "executed under his

Majesty's surveyor" (Inigo Jones). A previous minute, dated Sept. 27, 1626, orders that the governors "shall take advice of workmen concerning the new building of their parlour and lecture-house," to proceed as shall seem most. We must suppose that the part of this relating to the theatre was allowed to remain in abeyance.

The hall was built after the fire, and has no point of interest beyond this, that the semi-circular end of it occupies one of the bastions of the ancient London wall,—or, what is more likely, occupies the site of it.

The Court Room has an elaborate ceiling of elegant design, in the centre of which an octagonal cupola was introduced in 1733. Mr. Pettigrew attributed this ceiling to Inigo Jones; but this we should doubt, unless there be actual evidence of the fact. In this room there is a portrait of Inigo, attributed to Vandyke, and a plaster bust: we did not notice, when there, if the latter be the one referred to in the following minute:—

"August 9, 1750.—The master informed the Court that Mr. Gheys, statuary, had attended the governors at the last monthly meeting, and requested to have the skeleton that used to hang up in the theatre, for which he offered to present this company with some ornamental figure in plaster of Paris, which request being now taken into consideration,—It is ordered that the said skeleton be delivered to the said Mr. Gheys, on his presenting the company with the head of Inigo Jones, fixed upon a pedestal, and bronzed, and with such inscription as the governors shall direct."

Holbein's celebrated picture here, representing Henry VIII. presenting to the Barber-Surgeons the charter by which they were incorporated in 1541, is a wonderful piece of painting, full of character,—although not at this time exactly as it left the painter's studio. It was engraved by Baron; and the minutes of the company have the following entry concerning the occurrence:—

"27th August, 1734.—Copper plate of Holbein's picture ordered of Mr. Baron, for 150 guineas,—50 guineas on finishing the drawing, 50 guineas on delivery of the plate, and 50 guineas on 100 prints."

As an evidence of the estimation in which the picture was held by contemporaries, Mr. Pettigrew quoted a letter from King James to the company which runs thus:—

"JAMES R.—Trusty and wellbeloved, we greet you well. Whereas we are informed of a table of painting in your hall, wherein is the picture of our predecessor of famous memory, King Henry VIII., together with divers of your company, which being very like him, and well done, we are desirous to have copied: wherefore our pleasure is that you presently deliver it unto this bearer, our wellbeloved servant Sir Lionel Cranfield, Knight, one of our masters of requests, whom we have commanded to receive it of you, and to see it with all expedition copied, and redelivered safely; and so we bid you farewell.—Given at our court at Newmarket the 13th day of January, 1617."

It is interesting to know that the original cartoons from which this picture was painted are in existence. The portraits were taken on four portions of paper, which have luckily fallen into the possession of the Royal College of Surgeons, and have been put together and made to form a picture.

We must away, however, to St. James's

* Vol. III. p. 19. Under the arms in the doorway is the date 1671, with the words *De Præsentibus Dei*.

† Life of Inigo Jones, printed for the Shakespeare Society, 1868, p. 34.